

## Ireka Group gets ready for housing market pickup

The property market has slowed perceptibly but Ireka Development Management COO Raymond Chin believes it will start recovering next year. He says the group is planning to roll out three projects in the next 12 months, with a total GDV of more than RM700 million. Chin and senior vice-president Judy Loo talk to **Racheal Lee** about the upcoming launches. See Page 4



# 'Recovery will be a gradual process'

BY RACHEAL LEE

MOHD SHAHRIN YAHYA/THE EDGE

Ireka Group of Companies has been keeping a relatively low profile in the property development sector in the past few years. Infrastructure and construction have always been key income contributors to the group.

Founded in 1967 as a sole proprietor undertaking general earthworks and road construction, it currently focuses on three core businesses — infrastructure, real estate and technologies.

The group listed Aseana Properties Ltd on the London Stock Exchange in 2007 to undertake property development activities in Malaysia and Vietnam. Ireka Development Management Sdn Bhd was appointed the exclusive development manager to manage Aseana's portfolio in Malaysia and Vietnam.

Ireka mostly develops high-end and luxury projects under its luxury brand i-Zen, and it has since completed projects such as Tiffani by i-ZEN, i-ZEN@Kiara I and SENI Mont'Kiara — all in the upscale neighbourhood of Mont'Kiara.

In 2011, the developer announced its intention to set its sights on mid-priced property development and industrial development — a change in strategy. zenZ — a new brand that incorporates five characteristics — economical, evolutionary, efficient, essential and eco-conscious — was created for this segment.

Kasia Greens, handed over in June last year, is one of the first projects under the zenZ brand.



Chin: We are more optimistic about next year and we are getting ready with the launches



Asta Enterprise Park has a GDV of RM269 million

The developer's maiden landed home project in Nilai consists of 142 units of 2- and 3-storey terraces and superlink units on a 17-acre freehold tract.

Over the past three years, Ireka Development Management has launched several projects including The Ruma Hotel & Residences, a five-star global branded hotel and luxury serviced residence project in Jalan Kia Peng in the city centre, as well as 10 Shopz, a shopoffice development in Nilai. The Ruma is scheduled

for completion by the third quarter next year, while 10 Shopz will be handed over by 1Q2017.

## Asta Enterprise Park

Believing that the market will start recovering next year, Ireka Development Management chief operating officer Raymond Chin says the group is planning to roll out three projects in the next 12 months, with a total gross development value (GDV) of more than RM700 million.

"We are more optimistic about next year



The 30-acre Rimbun Kasia is Ireka Development Management's first township development under the zenZ brand



Loo: Asta Enterprise Park is the first guarded industrial area in Bukit Angkat and we offer a safe and secure working environment to business owners



exit points of the guardhouse and car park. "The project is good for investment because it is in the education hub," Loo says. "The target market will be students and people working at the airport and Putrajaya. Our previous project there, Kasia Greens, saw buyers who are working in Putrajaya. We also want to appeal to young families and young professionals, and encourage more young people to own their homes there."

The 30-acre Rimbun Kasia is Ireka Development Management's first township development under the zenZ brand. The group's previous projects — 10Shopz and Kasia Greens — are also in Nilai, but are not part of Rimbun Kasia.

Rimbun Kasia will also feature town villas, commercial village and condominiums. Chin says it is developing Rimbun Kasia based on the success of Kasia Greens.

"The unique feature of this township is the central park that is accessible to outsiders. It gives people the opportunity to play and spend time with their family," he says.

The 2.3-acre central park will have a lake, fitness and sporting facilities to encourage a healthy and green communal lifestyle. The commercial village in front of the central park will offer alfresco dining experience with views of the lake, a supermarket, retail outlets, games room, daycare facilities, gym and a multipurpose hall.

JS Valuers' Chan notes that property investors in the area will be able to get good rental because of the big student population.

"I am of the opinion that stratified residential properties, such as apartments and condominiums that offer security services and basic facilities, are ideal for student accommodation," he says.

"Condominiums and apartments will generate higher yield for the owners as they are cheaper to purchase than landed property."

Rimbun Kasia is a 10-minute drive from Nilai Toll via the North-South Expressway and Maju Expressway, and 20-minutes from Kuala Lumpur International Airport. It is also connected via the Nilai Sentral Bus Terminal, Nilai KTM Komuter Station and Salak Tinggi ERL Station.

Nearby facilities include Nilai Square Commercial Centre, Nilai Spring Golf & Country Club, Giant Hypermarkets, Nilai International School, Nilai University and INTI International University & Colleges.

The third project, Kajang Residences, is a condominium set to be launched by mid next year. Located 1.5km from the Kajang MRT station, it will offers 568 units and have a GDV of RM290 million.

Kasia Greens was handed over in June last year

and we are getting ready with the launches. We think the market will come back and begin to recover. It will be a gradual process," he tells *City & Country*.

The three launches planned are Asta Enterprise Park in Bukit Angkat, Kajang; dwi@ Rimbun Kasia at its Rimbun Kasia township in Nilai; and Kajang Residences.

Asta Enterprise Park, the group's first light industrial development, spans 31.5 acres and has a gross development value of RM269 million.

There will be three phases in the project, which will be launched together from Sept 6 to 8, says Judy Loo, senior vice-president and head of sales and marketing.

"Phase 1 and 3 — each with 18 units — will be 3-storey semidee industrial units. The main difference is that all the units in Phase 3 will have a basement level that serves as storage space. The built-up of a typical unit is 8,594 sq ft, on a 70 by 165ft plot, with a double void warehouse space at the rear of the unit," she explains.

The height of the warehouse space varies from 30 to 40 ft to allow storage optimisation, she adds. Priced from RM3.93 million, the units are equipped with a one-tonne double-door lift and high-speed broadband connectivity. The design allows flexible and multifunctional usage, such as for showrooms or office spaces.

Phase 2, meanwhile, will have six vacant industrial lots, ranging from half an acre to slightly more than an acre. Loo says these units are for business owners looking to customise their buildings. It is going for RM180 psf.

The project, she adds, is targeted at existing small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) owners from surrounding areas such as Balakong, Cheras, Serdang and Kajang, who are looking to upgrade or operate under one roof.

"It is the first guarded industrial area in Bukit Angkat and we offer a safe and secure working environment to business owners. There will be

24-hour security services, CCTV surveillance in each unit and a boom gate at the guardhouse," she adds.

Asta Enterprise Park is accessible via the Cheras-Kajang Expressway, Kajang Dispersal Link Expressway (SILK) and Kuala Lumpur-Seremban Expressway.

Chin says the land was acquired by the group's infrastructure division in 2009 to store its machinery, but as it is surrounded by established industrial areas, it made sense to develop it instead.

"Bukit Angkat has traditionally been a strong industrial zone for SMEs," he says. "We saw the opportunity to develop it into a strong industrial area. We did a lot of research to see what the competitors are doing and decided to put up the project."

Phase 1 was opened for preview to its business partners and associates in March, and some 50% of the units have since been taken up.

JS Valuers Research and Consultancy Sdn Bhd executive director Chan Wai Seen says many old industrial areas located further away, such as Bukit Angkat, have become sought-after because of rising land costs in other parts of the Klang Valley and new development policies such as rezoning.

#### Rimbun Kasia

Following Asta Enterprise Park, the next launch will be of low-rise apartment project dwi@ Rimbun Kasia in Nilai by 1Q2017. Loo says the RM130 million project will offer 382 apartment units in a 10-storey block on a 3.9-acre lot.

The built-ups of dual-key units range from 650 to 980 sq ft, with a minimum indicative selling price of RM297,480. So far, more than 2,000 registrations have been received.

The project is guarded and gated, with anti-climb wall perimeter fencing and 24-hour CCTV surveillance at the entry and